

reality employees of the customs office. To resist these men—not to speak of wounding one of them—constituted an affront against Spanish authority which could not be anything but serious. The writer of the letter was arrested, as leader of the party that had resisted. He is still in jail at Cadiz. Mr. Small is informed, and is communicating only through his lawyer. But one of the members of the expedition, a capable, trustworthy man, is now in New York, and will explain in detail a plan by which this treasure can be recovered. The later Mr. Pepper, no doubt, would have been eager to go on with the quest. Perhaps the executor of Mr. Pepper's estate would care to take up the work where his late friend had left it and recover this money.

Mr. Small reads all this with his eyes bulging and his breath coming quite feverishly. To think of that old scamp Anse Pepper playing such a desperate game and never letting on that he was mixed up in a hunt for buried treasure! Would Mr. Small carry on the work and reap the reward which death had so strangely struck from the hand of the late Mr. Pepper? Of course, he would. Anyway, he would take enough of a chance to go to New York and meet this Spanish seaman.

Spanish Frank meets Mr. Small at a down-town hotel in New York. He looks and talks the part of the Spanish seaman.

He tells in greater detail of the recovery of the treasure, the fight with the authorities, the repulse of the supposed pirates and the arrest of the leader of the expedition. That faithful leader is now in prison in Cadiz. Spanish Frank almost weeps when he tells about it. But for a comparatively small sum no doubt the leader can be released from prison. Then another small craft can be leased or bought and a second expedition outfitted to go and dig up this treasure which was found once and counted, only to be buried. But the man in the prison—the leader of the expedition—is the only one who knows the whereabouts of the treasure to-day. He must be released from prison as the first preliminary. Then the rest is easy.

By this time the virus of romance has Mr. Small's blood bubbling. He agrees to go to Spain with Spanish Frank and buy the prisoner's release. Also he will equip an expedition, if it doesn't cost too much.

In boasting of the methods successfully used in this swindle Spanish Frank declared that generally it was necessary to restrain the enthusiasm of his victim and to take refuge in an assumed taciturnity rather than to keep picturing visions of wealth to come. In fact, on the trip over Spanish Frank usually "went steerage" just to keep out of the way of his victim and to avoid the necessity of answering childishly enthusiastic questions about the treasure, its location and the

chances of making a final recovery of the money.

Once in Cadiz Mr. Small hunts up his correspondent's lawyer. He is informed that the Spanish authorities probably will demand about \$5,000 for the prisoner's release. This is higher than Mr. Small had figured on, but he is in no position to haggle over a few thousands. He pays, and soon is introduced to a man who figures as the released prisoner—the leader of the expedition and the only man who knows the exact location of the \$275,000.

As matters progress Mr. Small is relieved of surplus money at every turn. He is convinced that it will pay in the long run to buy, rather than lease a boat. The craft can be sold after the recovery of the treasure. So he puts up several thousands more for the boat, and additional thousands for hiring the crew and purchasing supplies.

By the time set for the sailing Mr. Small has parted with \$25,000 or more. And he is still in Cadiz. Also he never leaves that historic place, except by passenger steamer for the United States. For when the gang figures that it has taken about the last dollar that can be secured from Mr. Small, the Spanish prisoner, Spanish Frank and the Spanish lawyer all disappear.

Mr. Small returns home, grimly determined to say nothing about his loss. His little adventure in romances is over. Never again can he look at a copy of "Treasure Island" without having queer, prickly sen-

tations under his skin. In brief, he has been "trimmed" by the successful operation of the Spanish prisoner swindle of the oldest and most elaborate confidence games. But the people in the town never know. The local paper has a little item, which announces:

"Our fellow townsman, Jeremiah Small, has returned from a brief vacation trip to Spain. He says the best thing about going away is getting home."

The fact that nobody ever makes money over the Spanish prisoner swindle is a thing that keeps the swindlers going. The obituary notes are being sent after day in sounding out prospects. Many people respond to a matter of conjecture, but enough are carried to the final stages to keep the game alive.

Sometimes variations of the game are played. Recently a party visited from a small town on the Atlantic seaboard to sail to British Guiana on the strength of a story told by an "explorer," who reported finding a creek, the bed of which was almost solid gold. The party came because, it was given out, some huge insect menaced their lives. But, in fact, they probably got to take matters over and "cold feet" developed. There is always a pessimist in a crowd and that is why shrewd swindlers in Spanish Frank insist on playing double in this confidence game, which is based on the spirit of adventure that runs more or less vigorously in every man.

## The School of Auction Bridge

By ROBERT F. FOSTER

THERE are two conventions which I am continually asked about by all classes of players. One of these is the so-called spade convention and the other is the "informatory pass."

Both of these are part and parcel of the conventional double. To begin with the spade convention, this is simply a term given to a situation that asks the partner to give the preference to the spade suit when he is picking out a bid as an answer to a double.

The circumstances vary with the nature of the bid doubled. The first thing to remember, that the bid which is doubled must never be a spade, leaves the possibility of a spade bid by the partner open. The condition of the double is that the doubler should always be ready to support a spade bid, however weak the call may be, even four to the nine.

The convention therefore amounts to this: In answer to the double of anything but a spade the partner should call spades, if he has four of them, in preference to any other suit, even four good hearts or five or more clubs or diamonds, one of which, of course, must be the suit doubled.

Suppose the dealer calls a club, second hand doubles and third hand passes. If the fourth hand holds four spades to the nine, four hearts to the ace, queen and five diamonds to the ace, king, queen, he should bid the spades. That is what his partner wants; or if his partner does not want spades he will be found

out. But suppose the doubler of a club bid by the dealer holds four hearts to the ace, jack, six diamonds to the ace, king, queen, two spades only, say ace and ten, and one club. He may get a heart bid from his partner if he doubles. He cannot get a club, but might get no-trumps. If he gets a spade for an answer he will have to bid his diamonds, but not until he has tried to get a better contract.

The "informatory pass" is one of Sidney Lenz's suggestions for passing the buck. One should be pretty sure that one's partner understands it or there may be trouble.

This comes up in only one situation, and that a rather uncommon one, but still possible, and it is well to be prepared for it when it happens. The dealer bids a suit, second hand doubles and third hand bids. There is no compulsion on the third hand to take out the double, because it is taken out. If the partner insists on a bid he can double again. Passing in this situation usually shows no suit of five cards.

The "informatory pass," so called, is passing when it seems imperative to make a bid. This can happen only when the third hand redoubles the double.

This usually happens in no-trumps if it happens at all. If the third hand can assist a double suit he does so. If he has

a no-trumper, but none of the suit, he can redouble, but that does not make it any more expensive for the fourth hand to answer the double. When it is a no-trumper that is doubled and redoubled this situation may come up.

The partner has only one four-card suit, weak clubs or diamonds, but has three hearts and three spades, about equal. By passing he gives the information that he has not four spades or hearts, but exactly three of each. The doubler can take his pick.

Some players have tried to extend this "informatory pass" to cases in which the third hand does not redouble a no-trumper, but calls a suit which is neither heart nor spade. The trouble is for the doubler to know that he is not leaving the suit in, as the best he can do. I saw this recently in a game at a well-known club. (See illustration in the first column.)

Z dealt and bid no-trump. A doubled. Y said two diamonds and B passed, thinking he was using Lenz's "informatory pass." A guessed it, however, and instead of doubling the diamonds or bidding clubs called the spades and went to three spades doubled, over three diamonds, which held. He made three spades this way.

Y led a diamond; returned and trumped. A put B in with a heart to lead a club

through the no-trumper. Z played nine on the eight, A the jack and trumped it, leading a third diamond which A trumped. Y shed a heart on next club and Z won it, leading the queen, which A won, leading a small club. This Y trumped (a mistake), leading fourth diamond, which B trumped with the three, Z with the eight and A with the ace, returning the queen, which B won, pulling Y's last trump and leading the small club to A, who made it his. At double value this wins 265 points. Y does not trump the third club he wins 164 points by setting the contract by tricks.

This is the solution to Problem No. 138, in which there were no trumps, Z lead and Y-Z to win six tricks.

Z leads two rounds of spades, putting B in. B leads a heart, Z wins it and leads a club. Y wins this and leads the spade queen, forcing the decision back to B.

If B gives up the spade king on the second and A plays the jack on the second and Y ducks it. If A leads a third spade leads the club queen; Z having discarded his club. Now Z can adjust his discards to B's. If A leads a club for the trick the spade queen forces the decision as before. If A does not play the spade jack Y lets the ten win, as in first solution.

## Questions and Answers

### AUCTION BRIDGE

Question—The dealer bids a heart; second hand two spades; third hand two hearts, and fourth hand two spades, without any remark on the insufficient bid. His partner asks him if he was aware that the heart bid was insufficient, or did he think he was assisting a one-spade bid? Has he any right to ask such questions?—R. L. P.

Answer—A player may be informed as to any detail of the bidding up to the time of the final declaration. This would seem to allow him to be told that an insufficient bid had been made, even if it was too late to correct it. As to the other part of the question, did he think he was assisting? It seems to answer itself.

Question—In cutting for partners, are ties decided any differently than when

one is cutting into a table?—L. C.

Answer—There can be no ties in cutting, as the suits rank. Under the old laws there was a difference when a player exposed more than one card in cutting, but that is no longer so.

### POKER

Question: We are playing Spit in the Ocean and the table card is a trey. A has an ace, a queen and two trys in his hand, making four aces. B has three aces and a seven, making four aces for him, as the treys are wild. Which hand wins?—K. T.

Answer: The outside queen makes A's hand the better, as the aces are a tie.

Question: A opens a jack, B stays, and both draw three cards. A bets and B refuses to call. A shows a pair of kings,

Continued on page sixteen

♥ 872		
♠ —		
♦ J109753		
♣ 9765		
♥ A64	♥ K103	
♠ KQJ63	♠ 8742	
♦ 2	♦ 864	
♣ AQ42	♣ K103	
	♥ QJ95	
	♠ A1095	
	♦ AKQ	
	♣ J8	

ready and willing to call what he has. This may seem to contradict the basic principle of the spade convention: that the doubler always wants a spade to e-

♥ A97		
♠ Q765		
♦ —		
♣ A		
♥ KJ843	♥ 6	
♠ J10	♠ K98	
♦ —	♦ 8	
♣ 7	♣ K10	
	♥ 10	
	♠ A42	
	♦ 5	
	♣ 864	

There are no trumps and Z leads. A and Z want five tricks. How do they get them? This is a nice little two or three hours' work. Solution next week.

BRIDGE PROBLEM NO. 138